

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated December 20, 2011. Claims 12-19, which are the only pending claims, currently stand rejected. Claim 12 has been amended for clarity and has also been amended to conform the claim recitations to standard U.S. practice. No new matter has been added by the amendment.

In light of the amendment and the remarks presented below, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all now-pending claims of the present application.

Examiner Interview

Applicants' undersigned attorney conducted a telephone interview with the Examiner on March 13, 2012. During the interview, the Examiner suggested that Applicants distinguish Matsuura on the basis of structural differences highlighted by the present invention's operation over a full range of the working position range when the knob (38) is in both the engaged (or locked) and disengaged (or unlocked) positions. Applicants have attempted to capture such difference in the amendment reflected above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

Claims 12-19 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Matsuura (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0237317).

Applicants have amended independent claim 12 to clarify that one of the gear housing parts is provided with a knob arranged to engage a stop member on the other gear housing part and which in the engaged state allows angular motion of the cutting unit from a beginning of the working position range to an end of the working position range, but blocks movement out of the working position range to the transport position, and which in the disengaged state allows angular motion of the cutting unit from the beginning of the working position range to the end of the working position range and into the transport position, the knob thereby in its engaged state preventing movement of the cutting unit to the transport position, but enabling movement of the cutting unit to any of the at least two positions of the working position range.

Matsuura describes the inclusion of a locking pin (20) that engages recesses (19) to lock the trimmer within a pre-determined safety angle range (see paragraph [0021]). The pin can be unlocked to allow rotation of the coupling members (6) and (7) relative to one another. As such, Matsuura allows movement over the entire range of motion (including the range where operation is possible and the range where operation is blocked since it is outside of the pre-determined safety angle range) when in the unlocked position. However, Matsuura is fixed at a single location when in the locked position. Accordingly, Matsuura fails to teach or suggest at least a knob that in the engaged state allows angular motion of the cutting unit from a beginning of the working position range to an end of the working position range, but blocks movement out of the working position range to the transport position, and which in the disengaged state allows angular motion of the cutting unit from the beginning of the working position range to the end of the working position range and into the transport position as recited in independent claim 12.

Thus, independent claim 12 is patentable over the cited reference. Claims 13-19 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 12 and therefore include all of the recitations of independent claim 12. Dependent claims 13-19 are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons given above for independent claim 12.

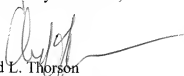
For all the reasons provided above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 12-19 are patentable over the cited reference.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendment and the remarks submitted above, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims are in condition for immediate allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present invention.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1196.

Respectfully submitted,


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